Keeping You in the Know

U.S. Department of Energy

Environmental Management Recovery Act

NEWS FLASH

March 8, 2010

# Recovery Act Impact at Hanford's Office of River Protection

## *Recovery Act funds provide a unique opportunity to accomplish mission-critical projects*

At the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford Site in eastern Washington state, the Office of River Protection (ORP) is using $326 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the Recovery Act) funds to create jobs and accelerate work at one of the world's most complex environmental cleanup projects.

ORP is tasked with operating and managing 53 million gallons of high-level radioactive and chemical waste remaining from the production of plutonium that was used to support the nation's nuclear arsenal. Recovery Act funding is being used to reduce the risk posed by this waste which is stored in 177 underground tanks.

As of February 15, 2010, $51.7 million in Recovery Act funds have been spent on projects at ORP creating 307 full-time-equivalent jobs (which include direct hires, staff augmentation and subcontractors).

**Recovery Act funding provides ORP with the opportunity to:**

- Create jobs and career opportunities
- Upgrade tank farm infrastructure
- Extend the life of nuclear operating facilities critical to the cleanup
- Prepare to deliver a consistent feed of high-level waste to the Waste Treatment Plant (WTP) where the waste will be vitrified

**Creating Careers**

Recovery Act funding is providing jobs for individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The **Office of River Protection is** taking a long-term approach, hiring direct employees not only to fill immediate needs but also with a view to **preparing the next generation of workers** for jobs that will be available after Recovery Act-funded work is complete.

*Recovery Act funding at Hanford is creating jobs.*

## Upgrading the Tank Farms

Recovery Act funds are accelerating infrastructure upgrades at the Hanford Tank Farms to reduce overall project cost and risk while supporting ORP's long-term mission to protect the Columbia River.

These upgrades include removing old, contaminated filters, exhausters, and other obsolete equipment. Electrical and waste-sampling systems are being upgraded and mobilization and transfer systems are being designed that will retrieve and prepare tank waste for transfer to the WTP.

*Workers removing an obsolete exhauster from a Hanford tank farm*

## Key Facilities Life Extension Projects

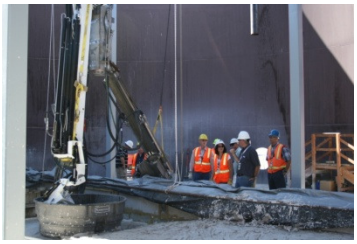
ORP is currently working to upgrade and extend the life of Hanford's only two operating nuclear facilities – the 222-S Laboratory and the 242-A Evaporator. These facilities are pivotal in the mission to retrieve the tank waste, feed it to the Waste Treatment Plant and ultimately close the tank farms.

Workers at the 222-S Lab have installed new analytical equipment, repaired or removed old infrastructure and upgraded the computer network. Crews at the 242-A Evaporator have used Recovery Act funds to decontaminate the operating heart of the facility, procure critical spare parts and replace valves and filters in the facility's raw water system. Both of these facilities are critical to safe storage of waste and its successful delivery to the WTP.

*Decontamination of the condenser room at the 242-A Evaporator*

## Preparing for WTP Operation

Ultimately, ORP is working to prepare a sustained and reliable feed system for the WTP which is expected to begin operations in 2019. In addition to system, equipment and transfer line upgrades, Recovery Act funds are being used to further the technology needed to support the long-term mission of waste vitrification. Development of these technologies helps maximize tank storage, improves waste retrieval capability and efficiency and increases worker safety.



*Recovery Act funding is being used in developing a component of the Mobile Arm Retrieval System*